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THE REMEMBRANCE OF FORMER DAYS.

A

S E R M O N.

Preached at *Broad-mead*, BRISTOL,

NOVEMBER 5, 1778.

By CALEB EVANS, M. A. u

Published at the request of those that heard it.

"Oh Memory! kind Monitor of thought,
That stor'd the pictur'd imagery of things
Within the cells of fancy, guard, oh guard
The British annals, rich with awful sense
And truth historic, from th' unhallow'd touch
Of Raven-plum'd Oblivion!"

"Coelum non Animum mutant, qui Papae serviunt."

BRISTOL:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM PINE.

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(Price SIX - PENCE.)

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Discourse here offered to public view, has nothing to recommend it but the honesty of its intention, which may serve, it is hoped, in some measure, to cover those many defects which by the critical reader will most probably be discovered in so very hasty a composition. Should it have the least tendency to awaken the attention, to excite the caution, to warm the gratitude, and enliven the faith and hope, of those who may honor it with a perusal, the author will by no means repent of yielding to the obliging solicitations of those of his friends, at whose earnest request it makes this public appearance.

BRISTOL,
Nov. 10, 1778.

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BRISTOL,
 Nov. 10, 1778.

S E R M O N, &c.

HEB. x. 32.

*But call to remembrance the former days:—it follows,
—in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a
great fight of afflictions, partly whilst ye were made
a gazing stock, both by reproaches and afflictions, and
partly whilst ye became companions of them that were
so used.*

THEY sang his praises, it is recorded of the
Hraelites, they soon forgot his works, What
a reproach to their memory! What an indelible
blot upon their character!—Shall we, my bre-
thren, incur the same censure, act in the same
manner? No; God forbid! But, whatever others
do, and whatever we may have done in time past,

Let us now, e'er it be too late, call to remembrance the former days.

This indeed is the express design of the present service. We do not pretend superstitiously to consecrate this or any day, except the day of God, as though there was more holiness in one day than in another. But all we profess, all we desire to do, is to take occasion from the return of this auspicious day, which has been rendered so signal by repeated important interpositions of divine providence, and on this account stands so brightly distinguished in the English calendar; to call to our remembrance the former days, wherein we experienced a great sight of afflictions, and were in many respects most dreadfully exposed. This was the duty the apostle inculcated upon the believing Hebrews, and this is the duty, Sirs, to which I would now invite you. Was it the duty of the *Hebrews* to call to mind former days, wherein after they were illuminated, they endured a great variety of hardships?—Must it not then, upon the same principles, be ours?

The ends to be answered by such a recollection are many and great. For instance,

1. It may serve for instruction.

By calling to our remembrance what has been,

we

we are taught what may be again. We are taught what men are, and what the tide of human affairs. What the pride and malice and cruelty and other passions of the human heart are capable of; and what worse than brutes, men, under the most specious pretences, may become to men. And at the same time, that a review of past events in general may be highly instructive, there is reason to think the review of dark and gloomy scenes may be peculiarly so. We are hereby taught the uncertainty of human felicity, how to act in the most critical circumstances, and when things are at the worst, never to despair.

2. It may serve for caution.

By calling to remembrance the former days, we may be the better able to guard against those things which might conduce to the return of such days again. Forewarned, we are the more likely to be forearmed. Experience, it has commonly been said, will make even fools wise. And yet it is strange to think how little attention is paid by the generality to what has been in former days, and how little advantage they derive from it with respect to futurity. But however inattentive others may be, do ye, my friends, call to remembrance the former days, and teach your children;

and your children's children to do the same;—
that they may learn to take heed, be apprized of
danger before it comes, and know how to guard
their various privileges and enjoyments with a
watchful eye, and a wise, a firm, and well in-
structed heart.

3. The recollection of former days may further
serve to awaken our gratitude for present mercies.
Too many surfeit upon the privileges and en-
joyments with which an indulgent providence is
pleased to bless them, surveying them with
“brute unconscious gaze,” and not knowing how
to set a proper value upon them, for want of call-
ing to mind former days, when no such privileges
were enjoyed, but their dread reverse experi-
enced.

Call to mind then former days, and, if you find
the present happier, as amidst all our calamities
and fears you most certainly will, let gratitude
warm your hearts, and the genuine effusions of
praise burst from your lips, and animate and
adorn your lives. Call to mind former days, and
then, contemplating your present mercies, let the
language, the devout language of your lips and
of your lives ever be—Bless the Lord, O my soul!

And,

And, what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits!

Or, should the former days at any particular period have been happier than the present, as they certainly have been; and should there be too much reason to fear the return of those former days which have been dark and distressing: yet still, call to mind former days,

4. For the encouragement of your faith and hope in God. In the darkest times, has He not appeared, scattered the clouds, and blessed us with returning day? And is his arm now shortened? Is his ear heavy? No; He that hath again and again delivered, is able still to deliver. Are we ready to sink in despondency? Call to mind former days, and be encouraged still to hope in God, that ye may yet praise him, as the health of your countenance, and your God. Call to mind former days, and as the apostle expresses it in the 35th verse of the chapter before us, — *Cast not away your confidence.*

Such are some of the many uses which may be made of calling to remembrance former days: to the exercise of which duty, happy would it be were there a more general and truly serious attention.

The

The study of History is one of the most improving as well as entertaining studies, the human mind can be engaged in. It extends our views, elevates our minds, blots out our narrow prejudices, and from a just and comprehensive view of the past, enables us to improve and enjoy the present moment, and prepare for the future. The far greatest part of the bible itself is history, which may serve to convince us in the most striking manner, of the importance of this study, and the vast advantages to be derived from it. Every Christian ought to be a good historian, and if his knowledge of history be improved by him as it ought, the better historian he is, the better Christian will he be. — And for an Englishman to be deficient in this kind of knowledge, is peculiarly shameful. If we lived in those wretched countries where the will of a haughty Despot stands for a law, and the caprice of a Tyrant might instantly and without ceremony deprive us of liberty and life; perhaps it were best to remain ignorant: for then alas! the observation of the wiseman would be dreadfully verified, “He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.” But here, in this happy land, where we have not only the free use of the bible, but of all other books of instruction, and the free use of our faculties to judge of their contents,

tents, and if it be not to the prejudice of another, to act accordingly—in this distinguished Isle, where by the very CONSTITUTION of the land, liberty is law, and law the charter of liberty;—to remain ignorant of the transactions of past ages, under such circumstances as these, and thereby to disable ourselves from enjoying present mercies, or warding off approaching judgments—argues a degree of stupidity and folly, which, for the honor of human nature, I am unwilling to suppose it possible should be ever realized.

I cannot therefore think it necessary to relate the events of past times, for the sake of informing so respectable an audience as that which I have now the honor to address: many of whom are, doubtless, better able to inform me, than I am to inform them. Yet will you not, I am persuaded, be offended with me, if with a view to ~~assist~~ your recollection, and to impress those things upon the minds of the rising generation, the knowledge of which is of the last importance to their most essential felicity, I endeavour this evening in a few words, to glance at the awful events of past ages, and thereby, in conformity to the design of the present anniversary, to call to your remembrance the former days.

The prime blessing of human life, and which I
had

had almost said includes all the rest, is LIBERTY.
 A word, which however it may have been abused
 by the licentious, and sneer'd at by those poor
 abject wretches, whose narrow souls are incapa-
 ble of comprehending its dignity and importance,
 —a word, which ought to be infinitely dear to
 every Englishman, and to every Christian.—
 “ Even a madman, if such there be, (as a lively
 “ writer finely expresses himself,) in so excellent a
 “ cause as that of liberty, is a respectable being in
 “ comparifon with him who grows mad on the tide
 “ of slavery and despotism. The one is a gene-
 “ rous, elevated, sublime character,—the other
 “ dark, fullen, malignant, and implacable. The
 “ one would rapturously take you by the hand, and
 “ lead you forth into creation, to enjoy all that is
 “ beautiful and enchanting around you. The
 “ other would seize you with the iron grasp of sa-
 “ vage ferocity ; drive you before him like an ox
 “ or an afs ; and plunge you into the horrors of a
 “ dungeon. Which of the two then should seem
 “ best entitled to confinement ?* The madman who
 “ smiles innocently in your face, and wishes to do
 “ you *every* good, or the worse than madman who
 “ frowns,

* The author here alludes to a criticism on one of his former publications.

frowns, lours, and grins at you, without wishing
 to do you any good?

Liberty is generally distinguished into civil
 and religious. By civil liberty we mean liberty
 with respect to civil things. Liberty from arbitrary
 confinement at the mere will of a superior,
 independent of law and justice: liberty from
 unjust condemnation and death: and liberty to
 enjoy and to dispose of our own property. In
 every free state, and such, blessed be God, is
 ours, this liberty is enjoyed; nor can there be
 true freedom without it. Where an arbitrary
 tyrant can imprison whom he please, without
 even producing an accusation, or naming the
 accusers; where he can even deprive of life,
 merely to gratify his resentment and caprice;
 and where the property of his subjects is at his
 absolute disposal, not their own: what are such
 men, but poor, abject slaves, who may be
 rather said to breathe than live; reduc'd as
 they are to an equality with the brutes, the pro-
 perty, and at the disposal of the masters who
 happen to possess them? A more humiliating
 state, cannot, I think, be conceiv'd of!—And
 yet

* See a Sermon on the late Fast, by a Layman, printed for
 Almon.

yet this, alas, was once the case, in too great a degree, with the unhappy inhabitants of this land! And had it not been for the generous struggles, under Providence, of our *Sydneys*, our *Hampdens*, and our *Ruffs*, must it not have been our case now? But, adored be the God of Providence, the snare was broken, and we are delivered. We can now boast of an act of *Habeas Corpus** to secure us from illegal imprisonment; of the privilege of trial by the jury of our peers, or equals, to secure us from illegal oppression and death; and the established right of the Commons of England ALONE† to give and grant to the state their own property.

Privileges.

* *Magna charta* only in general terms declared that no man shall be imprisoned contrary to law: the *Habeas corpus* act, points him out effectual means as well to release himself, though committed even by the King in Council, as to punish all those who shall thus, unconstitutionally misuse him. — *Blackstone's Commentaries*, vol. 4. p. 39. See a fuller account of this act, vol. 3. p. 136.

† The King and Lords only give their assent to money bills, — they are not permitted to frame or alter them; but this privilege is limited to the PEOPLE, by their representatives, to act as a controlling power against the abuse of the regal prerogative, and the great power and influence of the nobility. See *Blackstone*, *De Lolme*, &c.

‡ These it is well known are the invariable forms of expression in all our money bills, and have ever been considered by our

Privileges, the immensity of which no words can describe, and which all the powers of earth and hell will never be able to wrench from the grasp of free-born Britons, whilst there is any sense or virtue remaining amongst them.

Next to civil liberty, and so closely connected with it that the latter can never have any stability without the former, is religious liberty. By which

greatest lawyers and statesmen, as the most unequivocal proofs of the true freedom of the British constitution. The question is not however, whether it be *right* to pay reasonable and moderate taxes for the support of the government that protects us, or whether it would not be highly criminal to withhold them; for it undoubtedly would. But the question is, whether we could be, in any proper sense of the words, a *free* people, were we not by our deputed representatives, to judge for ourselves of the real exigencies of the state, and to have the disposal of our own property? If any man, or sett of men, over whom I have no legal controll, have the absolute disposal of my property, how I can still be a *free-man*, is a paradox which all the sophistry in the world will never be able to solve. Even if it should be proved that slavery is preferable to liberty, yet surely it can never be proved that slavery is liberty; or that to have our property at the absolute disposal of those over whom we have no controll is to be *FREE*. And surely it can be no difficult matter to determine, which is most honorable for a Prince;—to receive the necessary supplies for the support of government as the free and grateful offerings of a happy people, or to extort them with the despotism of a tyrant from slaves who dare not refuse them.

I meant a liberty to think, judge, and act for
 ourselves in matters of religion.—And is it not
 astonishing that it should ever have entered into
 the heart of any one man to invade the religious
 liberty of another?—Can we answer for one ano-
 ther at the last day? Can we *really* think for one
 another now? Can we reasonably expect that
 men's minds and ideas of things should be exactly
 alike, any more than their countenances, com-
 plexions, or voices? Is there any more reason
 why the Pope and his Conclave should make a
 creed for me, than that I should make a creed
 for them, and insist upon their subscribing it?
 Any more reason why they should shut me up in
 the cells of an inquisition, put me to the rack,
 tear my flesh off my bones, and at last very pi-
 ously burn me to ashes, because I do not believe
 exactly as they do, than that I should thus treat
 them, were it in my power, because they do not
 believe exactly as I do?—There never was,
 I believe, a human being upon the face of the
 earth, so exceedingly besotted as to think religious
 persecution justifiable with respect to himself.
 You never knew a poor bigoted Papist so ex-
 ceedingly ignorant and stupid, as to think it
 right that he should be persecuted by a Protestant.
 And yet what possible reason can be given why
 a Pro-

a Protestant should not persecute a Papist; but will be equally a reason why a Papist should not persecute a Protestant? What possible reason, why I should not persecute you, but must be equally a reason why you should not persecute me?

I may here observe, that the principles upon which our ancestors acted, whether right or wrong, in the restraints under which they judged it necessary to hold the Papists, were not the supposed absurdity of their religious tenets.* No; let their religious principles be ever so absurd, were there no other objection, they would be entitled to the fullest toleration equally with those who hold what may be esteemed the most rational principles. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. The

absurdities of transubstantiation,† purgatory, and other

* "It is plain the legislature considered them more as a *political* than a *religious* sect." Dean Tucker.

† "Transubstantiation, says the celebrated Archbishop Tillotson, is like a millstone hung about the neck of Popery, which will sink it at the last. And though some of their greatest wits have undertaken the defence of it in great volumes, yet it is an absurdity of that monstrous and massy weight, that no human authority or wit are able to support it. It will make the very pillars of St. Peter's crack, and requires more volumes to make it good than would fill the Vatican." Discourse on Transubstantiation, vol. 3. p. 359. octavo edit.

other Romish figments, are not to be destroyed by the sword of persecution, but by the force of sound reason and scriptural argument. But our ancestors judged it necessary to watch over these men with a jealous eye, principally because of their well-known and avowed principles of persecution, by which they become dangerous to society, and on which account it becomes necessary to guard against them, for the sake of our own preservation.

If they have seen their error, and are become more mild and gentle, I congratulate them, and I congratulate human nature in general, upon the happy alteration. Individuals, many individuals, I doubt not, there are in this communion, who from a natural humanity of temper, abhor persecution, and are willing to do to others, as they would have others do to them. And if this is really the character of the English catholicks in general, they are certainly entitled to the indulgencies they have lately received, and, indeed, to a further extension of their privileges. But how far such an alteration can be supposed to have really taken place, must be left to the impartial determination of every upright enlightened mind. It has been, I know, urged, that in the celebrated letters published under the name of the late Pope

Ganganelli,

Ganganelli, there are many fine sentiments on the subject of religious liberty, and many vivid, powerful arguments against persecution. These letters I have read with singular pleasure, many of them, whether actually written by the Pope or not, being perhaps some of the finest compositions of the kind that were ever published. But in this very publication, notwithstanding all the strong things that are said on the subject of persecution, this is considered by the Pope as an indubitable axiom—IT IS NOT ALLOWED TO TOLERATE ERROR.* Now what error is, and who is the pro-

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per

See *Ganganelli's* letters, vol. 1. p. 49. of the anecdotes. "He used to say, (i. e. *Ganganelli*) We too often lay aside charity to maintain faith; without reflecting, that if IT IS NOT ALLOWED TO TOLERATE ERROR, it is forbidden to hate and persecute those who have unfortunately embraced it."—And letter 89. vol. 2. p. 26—writing to a confessor, he thus expresses himself. "Insist, without intermission, on the necessity of shewing *due respect* to religion, not by inspiring a spirit of persecution, but by recommending an evangelical courage, which spares the person, but STOPS THE SCANDAL. Repeat frequently that the LIFE of a Sovereign, like his crown, is very insecure, if he suffers JESTING about the worship due to God, and does not PUT A STOP TO IRRELIGION."—Let the intelligent reader judge what a *Papist* would esteem a DUE RESPECT to religion, and JESTING about the worship due to God,—and how, if not by persecution, the scandal is to be STOPPED:—and yet, if it be not, the very LIFE and CROWN of a Sovereign are represented as in danger.

per judge of error, in the opinion of a Roman pontiff, I need not tell you: and if error is not to be tolerated, it is plain to a demonstration, that it must be suppressed. And if this be not persecution, what is? The good Pope would not have you persecute, whilst you can insinuate, but in the issue, if nothing else will do, be the consequence what it may, **ERROR MUST NOT BE TOLERATED**, there must be no **JESTING*** about the worship due to God; (in other words, about the consecrated wafer,) and woe be to that prince who does not **PUT A STOP TO IRRELIGION**, that is to all opposition to the absurdities and impieties of popery.

I think myself also bound as a faithful watchman to call to your remembrance another circumstance equally

* However, with the Pope's leave, I shall take the liberty to present my readers with the following poignant irony from Archbishop TILLOTSON:

"If it seem good to us to put our necks once more under that yoke which our fathers were not able to bear; if it be really a preferment to a Prince to hold the Pope's stirrup, and a privilege to be disposed of him at pleasure, and a courtesy to be killed at his command; if to pray without understanding, to obey without reason, and to believe against sense; if ignorance, and implicit faith, and an inquisition, be in good earnest such charming and desirable things; then welcome Popery, which, wherever thou comest, dost infallibly bring all these wonderful privileges and blessings along with thee!"

TILLOTSON'S Works, vol. 3. p. 392. octavo edit.

equally remarkable and interesting. And that is, that so lately as in the year 1776, the inquisition was revived in Spain with all its horrors. "The cells of the inquisition, in consequence of this resumed power, were soon filled with prisoners; some of them persons of eminence, nay even one of the ministers of state, who had manifested a contempt of some superstitious rite which was rendered profitable to the priests, was hurried to prison by a grandee of the first rank, who, perhaps to save himself from suspicion, gloried in the title of officer to the Holy Court of Inquisition. Two gentlemen of the law, distinguished by birth, and esteemed for their abilities, underwent a strict confinement and examination; it was said that they baffled all the sophistical arguments of the inquisitors, and were soon after found dead in their cells."

I own, I am an infidel as to the supposed alteration in the spirit of popery, and shall ever continue so, till more authentic documents are brought to prove it, than have ever yet been produced. I cannot help thinking it my duty, in the narrow
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sphere

* The above is extracted from an admirable letter, which lately appeared in the public prints, entitled—"The unchangeable nature of Popery."

sphere in which I move, to cry aloud, and spare not: to beseech my countrymen to call to remembrance the former days, lest e'er they are aware, and through their own supineness and indolence, these days should with redoubled horror, again return.

In former days, as the pages of faithful history inform us, not only was the civil liberty of this unhappy country overturned, but with it religious liberty also. In former days, not only were arbitrary oppressive imposts laid upon the people, and all the miseries of slavery experienced with respect to civil things—but, ah! dreadful to think of it! Popery was established by law, and the flames of persecution were kindled throughout the land.

To tell you what Popery was, whatever it may be pretended it now is:—to tell you what horrors it wrought in former days:—I need not exhibit to you the history of its bloody transactions in other countries: I need not remind you of the carnage it made in Germany, France, Spain, and throughout the European continent: I need not call up to your view the thousands and tens of thousands that were slaughtered for the sake of a good conscience, amongst the Waldenses and the Albigenses: I need not remind you of the inhuman

massacre.

massacre of thousands upon thousands in cool blood, and in the dead of night, at Paris,* for

which

* "On this occasion twenty-five thousand, according to *Mezeray*; thirty, according to *Thuanus*, (both Popish historians) were barbarously murdered; among whom were five or six hundred noblemen, or gentlemen of the highest distinction. Such a complication of hellish doings (who could have thought it?) found panegyrists among the abettors of Popery: *Peter Charpentier* wrote an apology for it: *John Des Caurres* praised it in an ode: the most luxuriant encomiums were bestowed upon it, in a speech pronounced before *Philip II.* The holy Father himself, *Gregory XIII.* was no sooner informed by *Cardinal de Lorraine* of this massacre, than, he went in procession to *St. Lewis's* church, where (*quake thou, O earth; tremble, ye heavens; and ye stars, withdraw your shining!*) he returned the merciful Maker and Redeemer of mankind, public and solemn thanks for that bloody work. Nay, that horrible transaction was represented at *Rome* in a magnificent picture, with this inscription, *The triumphs of the church*; which indeed was very proper, if it meant, *The triumph of the church of Rome over Christianity and humanity itself.* If these people did not glory in their shame, sure, no body ever did it — *Thuanus* shewed himself a much better man, when he applied to this tragedy the following lines of *Statius*."

Excidat illa dies aevo, nec postera credant

Saecula certè nos taceamus, et obruta muktâ

Nosce regi propriæ patiamur crimina gentis.

"May that day be ever remembered among those that are past!

May the cruelties that were then committed, meet with no credit in the ages following! At least, let us be sure, never to mention them

which very transaction public thanksgivings were offered up at Rome: But I may refer you to events nearer home. I may refer you to the horrid massacre in *Ireland*,* which exceeded even that

ourselves, and to suffer the crimes of our nation to remain concealed under the veil of the darkest night."

See Bayle's Dict. art. *Charpentier*, and art. *Caurres*. His *Critique generale du Calvinisme, de Maimbourg*, lett. xxiv. p. 489, 490. *Larrey's Reponse a l'Avis aux Refugies*, p. 275.—And, a most excellent pamphlet, entitled, *Popery always the same*, p. 59, 60.

* "If any one be willing to be more fully satisfied of popish cruelty, let him but consider the maxims, loudly proclaimed by their priests in *Ireland*, when their intrigues for carrying on the most detestable massacre against the Protestants of that kingdom, on the 23d of October, 1641, were ripe for execution. A true patriot would wish, that they were posted up in every one of our streets, that people of all ranks, and of all ages might read them: They were these: that Protestants were heretics, not to be suffered to live any longer among Roman Catholics; that it was no more sin to kill an Englishman, (viz. who was a Protestant) than to kill a dog: and that it was a mortal and unpardonable sin to relieve and protect any of them. They acted accordingly; for, within the space of two months, they massacred in cold blood, above ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND Protestants."

— See Sir John Temple's history of the *Irish* rebellion, p. 70. And the sermon of Henry Lord Bishop of *Meath*, preached the 23d of October, 1733, on the deliverance of *Ireland* from Popery, p. 16. and 33. and the postscript p. 87. 92. 119. This

that of *Paris*, and the guilt of which, all the arts of Jesuitism will never be able to transfer from the Papists. Yea, I may refer you to the fires of *Smithfield*, in the very heart of our own kingdom, where so many holy martyrs, as well as at *Oxford*, *Glocester* and other places, were offered up as burnt sacrifices upon the inhuman bloody altar of popish superstition and cruelty.

Read the book of Martyrs, contemplate the holy character of the sufferers on the one hand, and the complicated horrid nature of their sufferings on the other. Read, and let your children read the lives of a sullen, bloody *Mary*, a cruel *Bonner*, an implacable *Gardiner*, and the rest of those ugly persecuting monsters whose lives deform the British annals. Read to your families an account of the transactions of this day. Erect this memorable period of the English history, as an eternal

postscript contains a collection of the several murders perpetrated in the several provinces of *Ireland*, published by Dr. *Borlase*. Its authenticity cannot be questioned, seeing it was taken from examinations upon oath, by virtue of commissions under the great seal of *Ireland* for that purpose. And from this account it appears that the actions of these men were worse, if possible, than their words; none of those, whose tender mercies are cruelty, having ever used a dumb creature with the same barbarity, as the Papists used many of our own people at that time.

Popery always the same, p. 63, 64.

eternal pillar of remembrance. The attempt, how horrid! To blow up with gunpowder, the King, the Nobles, and the representatives of the people, with one general explosion! And thereby to introduce a religion, or rather a most horrid superstition, which could justify such savage barbarity! The truth of the fact, that such an attempt was made, that it was providentially discovered, and that the authors of it even gloried in it, and were actually executed for it—is as certain, as any historical fact can be that ever was recorded. The King's speech upon the occasion when he afterwards met his parliament, the public service appointed for this day in commemoration of it, with other authentic documents, render infidelity with respect to it as unreasonable, as it is ridiculous.

But this is not the only great event which as Britons and Protestants we are called to commemorate on this day. No; but I must add—yes, —and had I a voice as loud as thunder, I would sound it in the ears of my countrymen from shore to shore, saying—Call to remembrance the former days, in which the civil and religious constitution of your country was rolled to the very edge of a most tremendous precipice, and, had not providence, I had almost said, miraculously interposed, must have been dashed to ruin! I need not

tell

tell you, I refer to the glorious revolution under King WILLIAM—and surely Britons, whilst any spark of gratitude lives within them, will be ever ready joyfully to add—of IMMORTAL memory!

—Methinks I see the infatuated, bigotted, obstinate Prince that filled the throne before this auspicious period—elate with pride and self-importance, big with swelling schemes of establishing in church and state an absolute despotic sway,—surrounded with crouds of artful priests and crouching vassals, who are ready to echo all his mandates,—overwhelmed with fulsome addresses from every part of the kingdom—and on the very point of realizing all his fatal intentions! Methinks I see the seven venerable Bishops, who in that age of general corruption, had courage and virtue to resist the torrent of despotism, that was bearing down before it, their religion, their liberties, and all that could be dear to them as Protestants and as Englishmen: I see these truly patriotic and virtuous prelates, torn from their families, and the discharge of their pastoral functions, and thrust into prison:—whilst thousands in every corner of the land, with aching hearts and weeping eyes, are secretly mourning with them, over their slaughtered religion and liberties! But in this hour of general consternation and ter-

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ror, when hope seemed to have breathed its last, despair sat lowering on every countenance, and the Genius, the black, the sullen Genius of popery, "grinn'd horrible a ghastly smile."—hark! hark! the glad trumpets sound, the cannons roar, the Hero gains the happy shore! God looked from on high, he heard the sighings of the prisoners, he saw the designs, the black designs of the sons of superstition and violence, inspired the immortal WILLIAM with his own generous and benevolent spirit, threw confusion on all the schemes of Britain's foes, drove the unhappy monarch, with tremendous ruin down to infamy and woe, and caused the fair form of liberty divine, once more to lift her drooping head and triumph.

What your feelings, Sirs, may be, at the recollection of these former days, I cannot say. But for my own part, I freely confess to you, I can never think of them but with a glow of gratitude which no words can describe, and with an holy, adoring awe, of which a solemn silence is the best description.

I might call to your remembrance the former days, even since the memorable period of the revolution, when in the latter end of the reign of Queen Anne, the enemies of our happy constitution had again almost effected, the restoration of a
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popish Pretender, and the destruction of British liberty. But that God, who is privy to the most secret designs of the most crafty of the enemies of his people, again blasted all their hopes, by the sudden death of the Queen, and the elevation of the House of *Hanover*, in the person of *GEORGE* the first, the illustrious great grandfather of our present Sovereign. A Prince, whose memory cannot but be dear to every genuine protestant, to every grateful Englishman. Nor should we ever forget the arduous struggles of our generous NEW-CASTLES, and other patriots in that trying period; to which, under God, we owe all our present civil and religious liberties.

Nor can I wholly omit, upon this occasion, to remind you of those unnatural rebellions in the years 1715, and 1745, by which an attempt was made to demolish the fair fabric of British liberty, and to erect in its stead, under the bloody standard of a popish vagrant, the gloomy edifice of arbitrary power, and popish superstition.

But time forbids me further to enlarge.— From what has been said, you cannot, I think, avoid feeling the propriety of the exhortation in our text,—Call to remembrance the former days—wherein ye were dreadfully buffeted, and experienced a great fight of afflictions.—How much

much instruction is to be derived from it I need not say. The history of those past times which we are particularly led to recollect on this day, is big with instruction of the most interesting nature. It shews us particularly, what human nature is, and what Popery is, and what it will most probably again attempt to do; should it ever gain, which God forbid! the ascendancy. — It sounds moreover an alarm in our ears; it calls upon us to watch, to be circumspect, to take heed, lest what has been, should be again. It calls upon the clergy of the establishment, and amongst dissenters, and upon masters and heads of families, to disseminate with diligence and care the grand principles of Protestantism and free enquiry; the sufficiency of the scriptures, in opposition to traditions; and the right of private judgment, in opposition to ecclesiastical tyranny, and imposition upon the consciences of men. Whilst ignorance prevails, Popery will gain an easy triumph, but before the rays of knowledge it vanishes away. — Again, This devout recollection of past events, is calculated as I have observed, to awaken our gratitude. Our gratitude to the God of Providence, and to the God of Grace, for our present many and invaluable mercies. Ah! how different might

might it have been with us, from what it is! We might have been at this instant enveloped in Popish darkness, or suffering beneath its cruelties! We might have been the tools of a despotic tyrant, and held our lives,—our liberties,—and our all, at the caprice of his will! But, blessed be God, we live under a constitution of freedom, can sit under our own vines and fig-trees without fear, and dare call our consciences our own. Privileges, which I pray God may be continued to our latest posterity; and, if possible, extended to the whole world!—Or should any, engaged as we are in a most unhappy war, and hearing of wars and rumours of wars, be ready secretly to dread what the end of these things may be: yet still, calling to mind former days, let this be your consolation,—He that hath delivered, and doth deliver, is able yet again to deliver. Let our trust be ever in Him, our firm dependence fixed upon Him! Gloomy as the prospect may be, and gloomy it most certainly is, yet still, The Lord reigneth; let the earth therefore be glad, and the inhabitants of this isle, particularly, rejoice at the remembrance of his former mercies.

And

! And be it as it will with us, with respect to the present fluctuating state, the fashion whereof passeth away, the people of God have always this consolation, that e'er long they shall be all safely landed on that peaceful happy shore, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest for ever!

THE END.

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